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ABSTRACT

Designed to measure the acquisition of syntactic structures in kindergarten, first, and second graders, this test examines specific linguistic structures which appear to be acquired during the early elementary school years. Thirty-six sentences of equal length, consisting of words from a first-grade word list, are used to examine fifteen structures. Content validity rests with the instrument's derivation in psycholinguistic research and its reflection of an expected developmental trend. Mean scores for kindergarten (N=132) were 15.88, for first grade (N=113) 20.02, and for second grade (N=140) 22.55. Multivariate analysis of variance revealed significant differences between grade levels at the .001 level. [This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instruments Project (TRIP) monograph "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language arts" to be published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. A TRIP review which precedes the document lists its category (Language Development), title, author, date and age range (primary), and describes the instrument's purpose and physical characteristics.] (JH)

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NCTE Committee on Research

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CS 201 351

Category: Language Development

Title: "Linguistic Structures Repetition Test"

Author: Carol J. Fisher

Age Range: Primary

Description of Instrument:

Purpose - To measure the acquisition of syntactic structures in kindergarten, first, and second grade children.

Date of Construction - 1972

Physical Description - The test, which takes ten to fifteen minutes to administer, permits the examination of specific linguistic structures which appear to be acquired during the early elementary school years. A search of literature related to syntactic acquisition yielded the test items. Thirty-six sentences of equal length, and consisting of words from a first grade word list are used to examine fifteen structures. These structures include: mass nouns, unmarked indirect objects, comparative and superlative adjectives, irregular noun plurals, have used alone, introductory adverbs, introductory participial phrases, modals might and dare, coordinates except and or, unmarked adjective clauses, nominals, sentence pattern with a subject and a passive or copulative verb followed by a predicate nominative and another pattern, irregular past tense forms, the present perfect tense with got, and a sentence pattern with an expression of time followed by the subject and a verb and an expression of place and another pattern. The complete instrument follows on page 2. A scoring guide is available from ERIC.

Validity, Reliability, and Normative Data:

Content validity rests with the instrument's derivation in psycholinguistic research and its reflection of an expected developmental trend. Mean scores for kindergarten (N = 132) were 15.88, for first grade (N = 113) 20.02, and for second grade (N = 140) 22.55. Multivariate analysis of variance revealed significant differences between grade levels at the .001 level. The s-method developed by Scheffe was used to test comparisons of mean scores. The mean difference between kindergarten and first grade was significant at the .01 level. The mean difference between first and second grade was significant at the .05 level. The reliability of the test was checked using chi square analysis by examining the scoring for each pair of sentences based on the same structure from a randomly selected sample of ten tests at each grade level. This analysis revealed significant differences beyond the .001 level.

Ordering Information:

EDRS

Related Documents:

Fisher, C. J. The Influence of Children's Literature and Oral Discussion in Developing Oral Language of Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Children. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1972.

LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES REPETITION TEST*

Carol J. Fisher, PH.D.

Purpose. This test was developed to measure the acquisition of syntactic structures in kindergarten first, and second grade children.

Rationale. Most of the observations of language acquisition have been based on an analysis of samples from children's oral language. This has been particularly valuable in studying the language of very young children and in looking at developmental trends across age groups. It does present two problems; this kind of analysis is very time consuming and difficult to do with a large number of subjects, and with more mature children the structures which are acquired are less frequently used ones and a large sample taken in a variety of linguistic situations may be required to find particular structures.

This test, which takes ten to fifteen minutes to administer, allows for examination of specific syntactic structures that appear to be acquired during the early elementary school years. The structures selected were identified in a careful search of the literature on syntactic acquisition and come from studies conducted by Fraser, Bellugi and Brown; Berko; Deighton; O'Donnell, Griffin and Norris; Menyuk; and Strickland.

The repetition technique has been used in recent studies to test for a range of syntactic structures and appears to be a valid process.

Description. The test consists of thirty-six sentences examining fifteen structures. These structures are: mass nouns, unmarked indirect objects, comparative and superlative adjectives, irregular noun plurals, have used alone, introductory adverbs, introductory participial phrases, modals might and dare, coordinates except and or, unmarked adjective clauses, nominals, sentence pattern with a subject and a passive or copulative verb followed by a predicate nominative and another pattern, irregular past tense forms, the present perfect tense with got, and a sentence pattern with an expression of time followed by the subject and a verb and an expression of place and another pattern. Each sentence has the same length--eight words--and the vocabulary used corresponds to words identified as known to first graders on the Dale-Schuh List of 1400 Words. Proper names were eliminated since they often distracted children from the task on the preliminary testing.

Validity and Reliability. The validity of the sentence repetition test to measure acquisition of syntactic structures rests on its content validity. This was built into the test by basing it on linguistic structures suggested by psycholinguistic research and supported by the fact that it does reflect the expected developmental trend.

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The mean scores of kindergarten, first grade and second grade subjects were as follows:

Kindergarten	N = 132	15.879
First Grade	N = 113	20.022
Second Grade	N = 140	22.550

Multivariate analysis of variance revealed significant differences between grade levels at the .001 level. The S-method developed by Scheffe was used to test comparisons of mean scores. The mean difference between kindergarten and first grade (4.143) was significant at the .01 level with the Scheffe comparative ratio of 4.767 ($CR_{.01} = 3.053$). The mean difference between first grade and second grade (2.528) was significant at the .05 level with the Scheffe comparative ratio of 2.948 ($CR_{.05} = 2.458$).

The reliability of the test was checked by examining the scoring for each pair of sentences based on the same structure from a randomly selected sample of ten tests at each grade level using chi square analysis. This analysis revealed significant differences beyond the .001 level in the observed frequencies of points scored for the first and second sentence of each pair on the same structure since the chi square equalled 131.91 and with four degrees of freedom a chi square of 18.465 is required for the .001 level of significance.

LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES REPETITION TEST

Tell the child: "I am going to say some sentences out loud. Listen very carefully to me and then I want you to say just what I did."

Name: _____

Sex: M F Grade: _____

School: _____

Sample Sentences:

a) We're going to buy a new color t.v.

b) He's a good pitcher and plays with us.

If he repeats it perfectly, mark it "c".

If he cannot say it, do not repeat--mark it "x".

If he changes it, mark it "o" and write in the changes made.

1. Her father is principal and he can't come.
2. The hottest day is also the most fun.
3. Get doughnuts and two gallons of chocolate milk.
4. They have got to finish their pictures quickly.
5. Happy except tired, he won the last race.
6. He found the bicycle his brother had lost.
7. The drummer has a drum bigger than himself.
8. Quietly the small boy woke up his brother.
9. Every recess she jumps rope and she swings.
10. Building nests in tall places, birds keep busy.
11. The first to get there wins the race.
12. Somebody passed the ball and he caught it.
13. That band has got to march behind us.
14. The teacher asked us to whisper not talk.
15. She chose the tiny kitten the boy wanted.
16. Santa Claus has some helpers and eight reindeer.
17. He didn't dare walk on the icy sidewalk.
18. My big sister wrote the soldier a letter.

19. That man is captain and he's our neighbor.
20. Racing is more exciting, but swimming is easier.
21. She bought tomatoes and two heads of lettuce.
22. Her mother said she has got to go.
23. Jumping or pushing are both dangerous in school.
24. The coat the man wore was dark blue.
25. I have the book that our teacher read.
26. Slowly and carefully, the truck driver backed up.
27. Saturday he stays home and he watches t.v.
28. Hopping and jumping, the kangaroo ran from us.
29. The last sometimes miss getting as many turns.
30. He runs home and yesterday he ran back.
31. We have got to clean up our desks.
32. He says he's a sadder but better man.
33. The puppy the boy chose had brown spots.
34. The two policemen drove behind the emergency squad.
35. His sister asked if she might go too.
36. My brother gave his friend a birthday present.

LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES REPETITION TEST

SCORING GUIDE

STRUCTURES BEING TESTED

Sample Sentences:

- a) We're going to buy a new color t.v.
- b) He's a good pitcher and plays with us.

If he repeats it perfectly, mark it "c".
If he cannot say it, do not repeat--mark it "x".
If he changes it, mark it "o" and write in the changes made.

1. Her father is principal and he can't come.
2. The hottest day is also the most fun.
3. Get doughnuts and two gallons of chocolate milk.
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35. His sister asked if she might go too.
36. My brother gave his friend a birthday present.

INSERTIONS, DELETIONS, OR CHANGES IN THE UNDERLINED WORDS INDICATE THE STRUCTURE HAS BEEN MISSED

LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES REPETITION TEST

Directions for Scoring

1. A completely correct repetition is scored one point.
2. A correct repetition of the structure being tested with other minor errors was scored $\frac{1}{2}$ point.
3. Inability to repeat the sentence, inability to accurately repeat the structure being tested, or a complete garbling of the sentence was scored 0 points.
4. Variance in pronunciation was not considered at all. This would include such things as: "Santy" for "Santa", "cept" for "except", "gotta" for "got to", "hissself" for "himself", or "mergency" for "emergency."
5. Structures being tested are as follows:

<u>Sentences</u>	<u>Structure</u>
1 & 19	noun - verb - predicative nominative + clause
2 & 20	Comparative & superlative adjectives
3 & 21	mass nouns
4 & 22, 13 & 31	form of "have" plus got
5 & 23, 14 & 32	various conjunctions
6 & 24, 15 & 33	unmarked adjective clauses
7 & 25	"have" or "has" used as main verb
8 & 26	introductory adverbial
9 & 27	clause after first pattern
10 & 28	introductory participial phrase
11 & 29	nominalization
12 & 30	irregular verbs
16 & 34	irregular nouns
17 & 35	modals
18 & 36	unmarked indirect objects